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SERVICE AREA PROGRAM: A PROGRESS REPORT

Over the past few months, representatives of the Area Planning Board and its Urban Government Consultant, Dr. John M. DeGrove, have visited every corner of the county explaining the service area approach and answering questions that have arisen with regard to it. To date, initial meetings with municipal and other officials have been held in each of the seven service areas tentatively identified in the beginning by the Area Planning Board staff. The response has been most encouraging, and better than we could have hoped for. Two follow-up meetings have been held in Service Area #4, and that area is well on its way toward establishing a Council of Governments. Such a Council had already been formed in Service Area #1 (the Tequesta-Jupiter area). In addition, there has been a strong expression of interest in every service area which has been visited by the Area Planning Board Staff. Definite plans to move ahead toward establishing a Council of Governments seem to be shaping up in Service Areas #2 (Riviera Beach - Lake Park - North Palm Beach - Palm Beach Gardens area) and Service Area #3 (West Palm Beach area). Interest in Service Area #5 and #6 is not as definite, but follow-up meetings are planned and there is considerable evidence that further progress will be made. In the Glades area, Service Area #7, expressions of interest after our initial meeting have been encouraging, one follow-up meeting in Pahokee has been held, and the Area Planning Board Staff and Dr. DeGrove plan to initiate another meeting in that area.

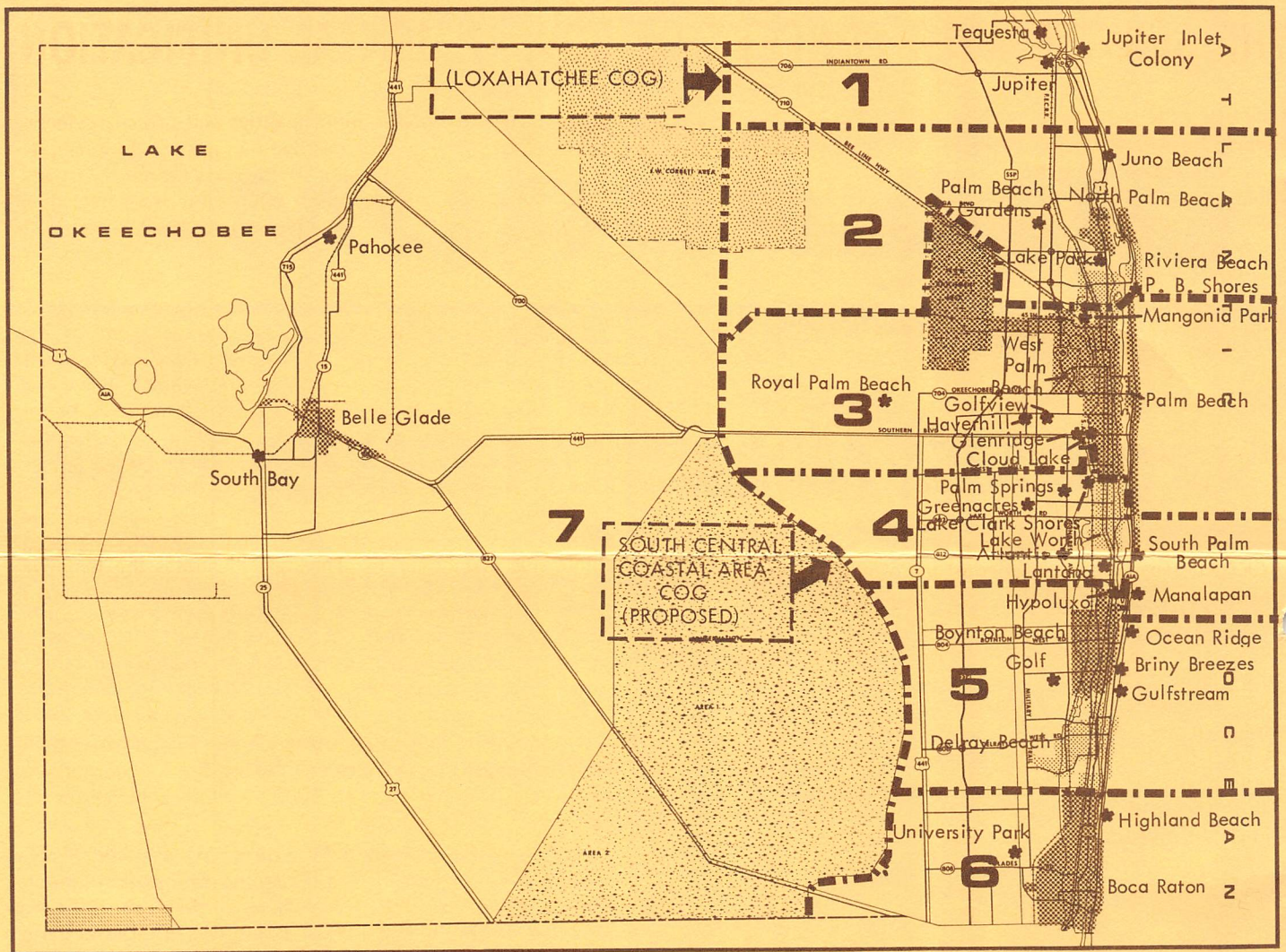
The Service Area Meetings have been characterized by an intense interest in the kinds of problems that might be handled more effectively should the municipalities in a given service area join together. Many of the suggestions as to the kinds of things that might be better provided jointly have come from the municipality representatives themselves. For instance, in Service Area #2, a suggestion was made that one hook and ladder truck was needed in the Service Area to handle highrises existing or under construction, but that there was no need for each municipality to purchase one. Joint ownership through a Service Area organization seemed a definite possibility. Another area mentioned in several of the meetings was the possibility for joint action with the Area Planning Board and the several Service Areas to augment the local planning effort. Areawide recreation planning came in for considerable discussion in terms of how the Service area might effectively work with the Planning Board to achieve more effective long range develop-

ment plans in this area. Indeed, almost every major service problem faced by the county was discussed in one way or another in one or more of the Service Area meetings. These discussions indicate that the original idea of the service area approach to dealing with problems was a sound one. It seems more clear to us now than it did in the beginning that municipalities have much to gain by giving serious consideration to joining their efforts in certain areas to more effectively and efficiently serve their citizens.

Another significant benefit of these service area meetings has been the resulting greater understanding on the part of municipalities of the nature and importance of the work of the Area Planning Board. In many cases it has been possible to discuss in some detail the major recommendations of one or more of the planning studies done for the Area Planning Board over the past five years. Thus, dozens of municipal and other officials from every corner of the county have had an opportunity to listen firsthand and ask questions with regard to the work of the Area Planning Board. Equally encouraging has been the interest in the several meetings on the part of the County Commission. There has been at least one County Commissioner in attendance at almost all of the meetings, and their interest in cooperating has been strong. The County has already indicated its willingness to support the Service Area concept by associating itself with the Service Area in the Jupiter-Tequesta area.

During the next several months, Mr. Johnson, the Acting Director of the Area Planning Board, and Dr. DeGrove will hold follow-up meetings in most of the service areas initially visited. We anticipate developments similar to those now taking place in Service Area #4. The prospects seem good that the possibility of achieving greater economy and efficiency in working together on certain service problems will result in the formation of Councils of Government in almost all the service areas in Palm Beach County. If this is the case, Palm Beach County will be the first major urban county in the nation to apply the Council of Governments approach on a sub-county Service Area basis across the entire county. The possibility for improving governmental efficiency by voluntary cooperation at the local level will have been given a strong push forward.

PALM BEACH COUNTY LIBRARY



SERVICE AREAS

SERVICE AREA CHARACTERISTICS	AREA 1	AREA 2	AREA 3	AREA 4	AREA 5	AREA 6	AREA 7	COUNTY TOTAL
1970 Population	9,000	57,000	100,400	61,600	53,800	30,000	33,800	346,000
Population Under 5 Years of Age, 1965	11%	10%	8%	7%	8%	7%	*	8%
Population 5-15 Years of Age, 1965	18%	23%	18%	7%	17%	15%	*	18%
Population Over 65 Years of Age, 1965	9%	11%	13%	16%	20%	25%	*	17%
Non-White Population, 1965	9%	21%	15%	2%	22%	7%	53%	18%
Population in Labor Force, 1965	32%	33%	37%	29%	33%	25%	*	33%
Median Family Income, 1965	\$7,300	\$6,500	\$5,500	\$4,900	\$5,200	\$6,300	*	\$5,500
Families with Income Under \$2,000, 1965	4%	5%	15%	13%	17%	14%	*	13%
Families with Income Over \$10,000, 1965	33%	21%	20%	13%	24%	30%	*	20%
Home Ownership, 1965	79%	82%	76%	85%	76%	85%	*	80%
New Residential Units Built 1965-1970	1,350	5,990	8,220	5,840	5,460	8,400	1,240	36,500
Population Living in Incorporated Areas, 1970	58%	79%	68%	64%	73%	98%	72%	73%
1990 Population Projection	48,000	136,000	173,000	110,000	147,000	82,000	69,000	765,000
Population Served by Septic Tanks, 1968	4,000	3,700	18,000	9,300	7,600	1,200	15,600	59,400
Sewerage Treatment Plant Capacity, 1965 (1990) **	.3(12)	5(34)	23(69)	14(44)	19(44)	8(25)	2(12)	71.3(240)
Sewerage Treatment Systems, Major (Minor), 1965	2(3)	6(8)	9(8)	10(9)	3(14)	2(3)	2(34)	34(79)
Water Treatment Plant Capacity, 1965 (1990) **	4(19)	14(55)	43(81)	25(51)	33(97)	12(54)	6(8)	137(385)
Water Supply Systems, Major (Minor), 1965	6(7)	9(18)	12(31)	13(29)	7(26)	3(5)	5(29)	55(145)
Solid Waste Daily Tonnage, 1970 (1990)	25(155)	146(442)	246(562)	155(358)	124(478)	63(267)	79(224)	838(2486)

* Data not available. Total does not include Area 7

**Millions of Gallons per day.

THE SERVICE AREA CONCEPT OF GOVERNMENTAL UNIFICATION

INTRODUCTION Over the next six to eight months, the Area Planning Board staff and Dr. John M. De Grove, urban government consultant to the Area Planning Board will be meeting with municipal and other officials in every corner of Palm Beach County. The purpose of this article is to outline what the Area Planning Board hopes to accomplish through these meetings. The background for the proposed Service Area Study is provided by some five years of effort on the part of the Area Planning Board in developing major studies in transportation, population, recreation, open space, beach access, water and sewer, and other major service requirements of a rapidly expanding metropolitan county. These studies have been substantially completed. The key question remaining is how and by whom the needed services will be provided for the people of the county.

BACKGROUND The complexity of the problems involved in keeping abreast of the service needs of Palm Beach County is well illustrated by a brief profile of the area. Palm Beach County is part of a rapidly growing Southeast Florida metropolitan area, often called the Gold Coast. The 1970 census reveals a continuing rapid growth in all three of the major counties in the area. The three-county area—Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach—contains 2.2 million people, an increase of 48% in the decade of the 1960's. Palm Beach County increased 51% to a total of almost 350,000 people in the 1970 census. Almost 100,000 of these citizens of Palm Beach County live in urban unincorporated areas. The 38 municipalities and a scattering of people living in rural areas make up the remainder of the population. A large number of special districts overlap each other across the County. Major service gaps exist in almost every important functional area. The gap is perhaps most acute and obvious in the areas directly related to water pollution, but other gaps also exist. Again the question must be asked and answered as to how and by whom these service gaps can be closed.

APPROACHES TO MEETING URBAN SERVICE NEEDS A demand for more and better urban services is not unique to Palm Beach County. Indeed, it is characteristic of urban areas across the nation. In response to these demands, a wide variety of approaches have been taken in an effort to find satisfactory solutions. Proposals for reorganizing local government structure have ranged from consolidating all local governments in a given area into one single government, to some minor adjustments in the structure and function of local governments. The Jacksonville consolidation approach is an example of the one layer plan that has received much nationwide publicity, but it is too early for a final assessment of its effectiveness. In other areas, various combinations of cooperation between area wide governments, usually a county, and the smaller local government units, usually cities, have been worked out. In California, the so-called Lakewood Plan involves an elaborate and extensive system of contracts between counties and cities. The approach finds the county contracting between counties and cities. The approach finds the county contracting to provide the urban services for the city. In other sections of the country, one can find illustrations of a large central city contracting to provide

urban services to smaller municipalities and urbanized incorporated areas in the general metropolitan region. The examples here that can be cited include Atlanta and Cleveland. In any event, the service area approach under discussion here does not fall neatly within any of the major approaches discussed above.

THE SERVICE AREA APPROACH The basic idea of the Service Area approach is that the County divides itself more or less naturally into seven service areas, within which—and among which—cooperative working relationships will result in better and more services as a given unit cost. The Area Planning Board staff has made a tentative designation of seven service areas, six along the coastal section of the County and one in the Glades area. The six coastal service areas begin with the Jupiter-Tequesta area in the north and extend to the Boca Raton area on the south. The map illustrates the tentative boundaries of these service areas. The word tentative is stressed because one of the major purposes of the meetings within these service areas over the next few months will be to determine from the people within the areas just how realistic the tentative boundaries seem to be.

Almost a quarter million people live in the coastal municipalities making up the six service areas. Their urban unincorporated area cousins number close to 100,000. Both components of the urban Palm Beach County population—urban unincorporated and municipality—continue to grow rapidly. The central purpose of the Service Area is to explore with interested citizens in these areas how they can work together to better provide services that are vital to any urban area. The scope and pace of these needs have been explored over the past five years by the Area Planning Board. The Service Area Study idea is not to file these studies away to gather dust, but to take the results to Service Area leaders and explore how the theoretical solutions to transportation, sewer, trash, beach access, fire, recreation, and other such service problems can be changed into practical reality.

It is not the purpose of the Service Area approach to propose the elimination of the 38 municipalities now existing in the county in favor of one consolidating government, or to present any other preconceived ideas about how to cope with the county's problems. It will be our purpose to promote discussion and understanding of Service Area needs, and explore ways of working together through the Service Area approach to meet these needs. Perhaps that will mean cooperating in a given service area through an organization, a kind of mini-council of governments. We think it quite probable that this will be the case. Such a group has already been formed in the Service Area No. 1 and is composed of the municipalities of Jupiter, Tequesta and Jupiter Inlet Colony. We think that probably the leadership from the seven service area groups might then work closely with the County Commission and the Legislative Delegation in a cooperative effort to solve service problems. Of one thing we are certain; solutions to these problems must and will be forthcoming. If grass roots local government cooperation fails to do the job, some form of federal, state, or regional substitute will fill the service gap. The Service Area approach makes the assumption that the grass roots method is best, if it can be accomplished.

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